From:
magentashadow@webtv.net (Terry McCombs)
Date:
Mon, 26 Mar 2001 22:00:26 -0600 (CST)
To:
slotdb@yahoo.com
Subject:
Green Man
Message-ID:
<20156-3AC01E6A-2721@storefull-251.iap.bryant.webtv.net>
Content-Disposition:
Inline
Content-Type:
Text/Plain; Charset=ISO-8859-1
Content-Transfer-Encoding:
Quoted-Printable
MIME-Version:
1.0 (WebTV)
Content-Length:
5025

NAME: The Green Man.

SYMBOLS: Man's face surrounded by leaves.

USUAL IMAGE: Ether a man's face looking out of cluster of leaves, or leafs that seem to form a human face.

HOLY DAYS May the 1st.

PLACE OF WORSHIP: A forest, an orchard or field ether ready for planting crops or harvesting.

MAJOR TABOOS: Taking without putting a bit back.

RELATIVES: All plant life, any of a number of seasonal Goddesses.

SYNODEITIES: Many, it could be said that the Green Man can be likened to dozens of Gods who were born in the Spring, lived and loved during the Summer, died in the Fall to spend the Winter in the underworld only to be reborn again in the spring. Such as Adonis, Lono, Xipe, Dionysus, Tammuz, John Barleycorn, and many, many others.

DETAILS: There is no diety called the Green Man, the term was one coined to name a figure that first appeared on funeral stones outside of churches, and later was secreted in out of the way places by stone masons on the early cathedrals.

At first appearing sad or angry, later, about the time that worship of Mary became part of Church practices, happy or triumphant.

Just what this image was to them we cannot say, but it is thought to be an image of nature as an awakened initiator, a guardian and revealer of nature's mysteries, whose body was wild nature itself. He is an icon that will not leave the Western mind it seems turning up again and again.

The Green Man becomes The Green Knight.
One of the first places he shows up in among the tales of King Arthur. There he shows up in green armor riding a green horse. Riding right into court, he offers to let any knight take a swing at his neck, noting that if he should live the knight must seek him out one year later and let the Green Knight take the same strike at his neck.

Sir Gawain, the most handsome and fearless of knights, accepted the stranger's challenge and chopped the Green Knight's head off with one stroke. As the head is rolling around on the floor the Green Knight's body walks over, picks up the head, puts it back on, and leaves reminding Gawain to look for him in one year.

One year later Gawain arrives at the chapel where the Green Knight lives. There he was tested by the Knight's wife. He succumbed somewhat to her. Later he offers his neck to the Green Knight who wings his sword but stops just before it would have hit giving him only a small nick to remind him of his indiscretion.

It can also be said that Robin Hood of Sherwood Forrest is another face of the green one. More than a few people have expounded on the divine origan of Robin & Marian.

Another example of `Jack In The Green´ as some called him can be found among the chimney sweeps of old London. At one time they had a presentation they preformed each May day in which a man would peer out of a cage made from wicker and covered in leaves.

The sweeps then dressed up in gaudy tinsels and ribbons and danced around the framework banging drums, blowing whistles, and cracking shovels and sticks together. Sometimes this got out of hand especially when rival groups set up their Jack in the Green.

Can the Green Man be found today in new modern forms? Some will disagree, but I think the following could be said to count.

One of the strangest appeared in 1946 in the pages of the science fiction magazine Amazing Stories then being edited by Ray Palmer who some call the father of ufology.

The Story was The Green Man by Harold M. Sherman. Sherman was a pulp writer and noted psychic of the time who had participated in a telepathy experiment with an explorer at the Pole.

The story concerned the coming of a messiah figure in a flying saucer (this was months before the sighting in 1947 that would coin the phrase) He returned in late '47 in the apply titled Return of the Green Man. Sherman would later claim that the idea that UFOnauts were `little green

man´ came about as a result of his story..... even if his Green Man was pretty tall.

In the 50's there was the Jolly Green Giant.
Sure he was just a corporate symbol, but you have to give him points for the fact that 50's Moms wrote the company in the early 50's asking that he be taken off the tube because his claymation image was scaring the kiddies!
And there is that huge statue of him in Blue Earth, Michigan.

Another to consider are such legendary critters as the Yeti, Bigfoot, & Sasquatch. How many people have claimed to have seen their hairy face starring out at them through the green?

Lastly I would add DC Comics Swamp Thing, I think he could be included for consideration if for no other reason the concept of the `Parliament of Trees´ that appeared in the magazine when it was being written by Alan Moore.

While never really a worshipped diety per say, I would say that this figure is still one that is deeply rooted in the Western mind.

Terry McCombs

The God of the Month Club.

http://community-2.webtv.net/magentashadow/GOMC/